

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-45 are pending in this application, with claims 24-26, 28, 29, 31-34 and 36-41 being withdrawn from consideration. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 3 are amended, claim 2 is canceled and claims 44 and 45 are added. Claim 44 is drawn to an image forming apparatus and is readable on at least Figs. 2 and 14. Therefore, claim 44 is generic to both species I and II. No new matter is added. In view of at least the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of claims 42 and 43, and the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 3-21.

By the above amendments, claim 3 has been rewritten into independent form including all of the features of base claim 1. Claims 4-21 depend from claim 3. Therefore, claims 3-21, 42 and 43 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 3-23, 27, 30, 35 and 42-45 read on elected species I, Figs. 1-11. Applicants respectfully request rejoinder of withdrawn claims 24-26, 28, 29, 31-34 and 36-41 upon allowance of elected claim 1. The withdrawn claims depend from claim 1, and accordingly, rejoinder of the withdrawn claims is proper upon allowance of claim 1. See MPEP §821.04.

Claims 1, 2, 22, 23, 27 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Publication 2000-158637 to Koyama et al. ("Koyama"); and claim 30 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Koyama. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Koyama fails to disclose or suggest an image forming apparatus including a platen and a plurality of rollers where "at least a part of the rollers rotate independently from each other," as recited in independent claim 1. As stated in paragraph [0030] of Koyama, "rotation drive of the above-mentioned conveyance roller 12 is carried out by the drive motor which is the driving means which carries out the rotation drive of the delivery roller 9." That is, the

conveying rollers 12 illustrated in drawing 7 of Koyama are driven by the same driving motor, and accordingly do not rotate independently from each other. Furthermore, the Office Action does not point to any disclosure in Koyama that would indicate that the rollers can rotate independently from each other. Thus, for at least this reason, claim 1 is patentable over Koyama.

Claims 22, 23, 27, 30 and 35 depend from claim 1 and are therefore also patentable over Koyama for at least the reasons enumerated above, as well as for the additional features they recite.

New claim 44 is also patentable over Koyama because Koyama fails to disclose or suggest that "the rollers being disposed on a plurality of the lines arranged substantially in parallel with each other," and where the suction opening "is defined between adjacent lines on the surface of the platen," as recited in claim 44. As shown in drawing 7 of Koyama, the inhalation-of-air holes appear to be defined between individual rollers, and there is no disclosure that the inhalation holes are positioned between adjacent lines of rollers, as required in claim 44. See Koyama at paragraphs [0037]-[0038]. Thus, for at least this reason, claim 44 is also patentable over Koyama.

Claim 45 depends from claim 44 and is therefore also patentable over Koyama for at least the reasons enumerated above, as well as for the additional features it recites.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Amendment Transmittal

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